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ABSTRACT

Focusing on black communication skills in the classroom can be rewarding, instructional, and motivational for both black and white students when educators begin to build upon the effectiveness of black language patterns and usages. This packet of curriculum materials was designed for class, group, and individual instruction in the use of black folk types and features (i.e., folk song-types, black folk sermons, black folk verbal strategies, folk literature by known Black-American authors, and non-standard English dialects). In addition to lists of African-American types of folk literature (e.g., story telling, folk sermons, and blues), African-American verbal strategies (e.g., rapping, jiving, and sounding), the stylistic and thematic features of Black-American folk tradition, important terms, the packet includes general and specific suggestions regarding instructional activities that use folk songs, spirituals, jokes, folk sermons, and literary works to teach about the effective use of dialects and language styles, and about rhetoric and composition. In addition, oral and written assignments, a selected bibliography, and 43 references are provided. (GFW)

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SOME WAYS TO USE THE RHETORICAL SKILLS OF THE BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION TO TEACH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

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INTRODUCTION

The use of black communication skills in the classroom can be rewarding instructional and motivational forces for both blacks and whites when educators begin to build upon the effectiveness of black language patterns and usages. The following curriculum materials are designed (with this thought in mind) for class, group, and individual instruction in the use of black folk types and features (i.e., folk song-types, black folk sermons, black folk verbal strategies, folk literature by known black American authors), and dialects (emphasizing Non-Standard English usage and language style appropriateness). Specific class, group, and individual activities, oral and written assignments, and a selected bibliography for students and teachers are provided. References should be made to the sections of this presentation that give a preliminary discussion of types, features, and verbal strategies of the black American (oral) tradition.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN TYPES OF FOLK LITERATURE

Story telling, oral tradition,
and narrative fiction (prose)

Original folk tales written by known authors

Folk Sermons

Ballads

Non-religious or secular songs

Blues

Work songs

African-American jokes

AFRICAN-AMERICAN VERBAL STRATEGIES

Rapping

Running it down

Jiving

Shucking

Copping a plea

Sounding

Signifying

Refer to explanations given about the characteristics of the following which may be used to instruct rhetoric and composition.

MOST OUTSTANDING STYLISTIC FEATURES OF THE BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION

irony

imagery

symbolism

figurative language--simple, metaphor, personification

allegory

use of strong adjectives, adverbs, and verbs

ordering of ideas--mainly chronological and NARRATIVE ORDERING

effective repetition

sentence rhythms and intonation

words with double meanings

effective use of "hip" or "jive" vocabulary

onomatopoeic word effects

dramatic dialogue

pithy statements

idiomatic language

MOST OUTSTANDING THEMATIC FEATURES OF THE BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION

wit

practical and homely wisdom and philosophy

scheming

humor

realism

superstition

exaggeration

myth and ritual

nearness to the identification with nature

universality of appeal

expressions of philosophical ideas

NOTES: For a description of the basic features of Non-Standard Black Vernacular English found in most literary types of the black folk tradition refer to Ralph Fasold and Walt Wolfram, "Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect" in Teaching Standard English in the Inner City, ed. Ralph Fasold and Roger W. Shuy (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970), pp. 41-86.

* Composition topics may be based upon the above listed information and illustrated by using features, types, and strategies of the black American folk tradition.

GENERAL AREAS FOR CLASS, GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS BASED UPON THE NARRATIVE TYPES OF THE BLACK FOLK TRADITION

purpose--what the work seeks to do

function

comparison of types

plot

theme (if any)

conflict

what each offers--how it makes a point

type of content--point of the work--subject matter

recreation of one's own original version of the work (if possible)

how form (folk elements) fits content or theme or subject matter

organization

characterization

literal significance

setting (time and place)

tone

psychology of the work

poetic structural patterns for folk types that are basically narrative in nature

how characters respond to pressures of life presented in the story

Composition topics may be based upon the above listed information and illustrated by using the folk types and folk features (stylistic and thematic).

PRE-READING PROCESS

STRUCTURAL PATTERNS OF POETRY FOR USE IN PRESENTING BLACK FOLK SONG-TYPES

Guides to Idea Pattern

1. Identify the sentences and sense units.
2. Identify connecting words.
3. Identify special patterns of words and phrases.
4. Identify the overall idea pattern.

Guide to Image Pattern

1. Identify the images.
2. Identify the image pattern.
   a. Are the images parts of a single larger image:
   b. Are the images separate images joined by a single theme?
3. In what way do the images support the structural pattern?
   a. Is the structural pattern entirely one of images
   b. Is the image pattern joined with another pattern such as the idea pattern?
4. What theme, idea, or emotion do the images suggest?

Guides to Narrative Pattern

1. Identify the incidents or episodes.
2. Identify the narrative pattern.
   a. Denouement.
   b. Exposition.
   c. Incident and character.

First-Level Meaning

Syntax and Situation

1. Title
2. Vocabulary
3. Syntax
4. Situation
5. Speaker

Structural Patterns

1. Narrative pattern
2. Image pattern
3. Idea pattern

This suggested analysis of poetry and other useful information about the analysis of poetry may be found in Harry Brown and John Millstead, Patterns in Poetry-An Introductory Anthology (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968).

LIST OF TERMS IMPORTANT IN A DISCUSSION OF THE BLACK FOLK TRADITION

ALLEGORY

ALLUSION

ANTAGONIST

CHARACTER

CLIMAX

CONFLICT

DENOUEMENT

DIALECT

DIALOGUE

EPIC

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

FOLK TALES

GENRE

"HIP" OR "JIVE" VOCABULARY

IRONY

LITERAL LANGUAGE

METAPHOR

MYTH

ONOMATOPOEIA

PLOT DEVELOPMENT

PROTAGONIST

PUN

RHYME

RHYTHM

SATIRE

SETTING

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS (ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN) EMPHASIZING THE USE OF ASPECTS OF THE BLACK FOLK TRADITION TO INSTRUCT EFFECTIVE USE OF DIALECTS AND LANGUAGE STYLES

1. Discuss the educational and social varieties of English. Refer to W. Nelson Francis, The English Language--Chapter VI--"Usage and Variety in English"--(i.e., educated or standard English; vernacular; uneducated English). Relate these varieties to the use of various dialects--Standard and Non-Standard.

2. Tell why Non-Standard English is the most appropriate language for use with the black folk tradition. Discuss other appropriate situations for the use of various types of dialects with an emphasis upon language styles--(frozen, formal, consultative, casual, intimate). Refer to Martin Joos--"The Styles of the Five Clocks," in Language and Cultural Diversity in American Education edited by Roger D. Abrahams and Rudolph C. Troike.

3. Use black folk stories (or passages from) and black folk poetry (written and oral) and by anonymous and known authors to discuss and to make distinctions between Standard and Non-Standard English and to emphasize features of Non-Standard English used prevalently.

4. Use black folk stories, poetry, folk sermons, African-American jokes to practice the "shifting" or code-switching of dialects Non-Standard and Standard.

5. Determine which dialect or style is the most appropriate for the productivity of a story.

6. Use the black dialect to practice the use of the black verbal strategies.

7. Compare Dunbar's use of language with that of Don Lee.

8. Discuss features of the traditional dialect found in works of Dunbar, Daniel Webster Davis, James D. Corrothers, and James Edwin Campbell.

9. How did the use of dialect by Dunbar, Davis, Corrothers, and Campbell express the stereotypical moods of humor and pathos in their black characters.

10. Compare Chesnutt's use of the black folk tradition elements with the same type elements found in anonymous black folk tales of the same type.

11. Compare Chesnutt's use of black dialect with that of James Baldwin, Zora Hurston, Richard Dorson (in his black folk tale collections), Ernest J. Gaines, or William Melvin Kelly; or discuss representations of each author's use of dialect separately; or compare any two of the authors listed here.

12. Discuss the use of dialect in poetry of Hughes, Margaret Walker, and Sterling Brown.

13. Discuss the use of black dialect in black folk sermons.

14. Examine black dialect found in folk song-types, black folk sermons and African-American jokes.

15. Examine the dialect found in Gullah folk tales told by Albert H. Stoddard and Dick Reeves.

16. Use black dialect spoken by students (or commercially produced) to drill effective dialect usage (Standard and Non-Standard English) and/or code switching of dialects.

Base WRITING ASSIGNMENTS upon the discussions of the above listed information and/or those items that are not directly stated as writing assignments. Items may serve the purposes of group, individual, or class oral discussions or writing assignment topics.

THE USE OF ORIGINAL BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TALES TO TEACH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Discuss the following:

1. Types of original black American folk tales

   a. Animal
   b. Old Marster & John
   c. Protest
   d. Scare
   e. "Professor"
   f. Tales of the land (rich and poor)
   g. Religious
   h. Preacher
   i. Fool
   j. The Lord & the Devil
   k. Witches & Mermaids
   l. Wonders
   m. Hoodoos and Two-Heads
   n. Lying
   o. Colored Man and White Man
   p. Spirits and Hants
   q. Horrors

2. Important features of original black American folk tales - (Refer to the sections entitled "Most Outstanding Stylistic Features of the Black American Folk Tradition," and "General Areas for Class, Group and Individual Activities and Assignments Based upon the Narrative Types of the Black American Folk Tradition.")

3. How form blends with content in original black American folk tales

4. Conflict in original black American folk tales

5. Structure--Use of Narration Devices and Characteristics in original black American folk tales

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS (ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN) BASED UPON THE USE OF ORIGINAL BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TALES

1. Read original black American folk tales (refer to the bibliography in this section) and re-tell them-orally or in writing. Put emphasis upon fluency and narrative techniques.

2. Create original folk tales and give them orally and fluently in one's own dialect.

3. Make distinctions between the various types of original black American folk tales.

4. Dramatize selected original black American folk tales (with the script prepared by students and drawn from its sources).

5. Examine elements of fiction found in original black American folk tales.

6. Discuss the basic thematic and stylistic characteristics of black American folk tales.

7. Describe how characters (or figures) in original black American folk tales reach their goals. What are the basic purposes of the specific types of original black American folk tales?

THE USE OF BLACK AMERICAN FOLK SONG-TYPES TO TEACH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Important facts observed by several authors about the various diverse structural poetic forms of folk song-types:

1. General information about black folk song-types--
...the African tradition of using music on all occasions and of classifying the music according to its function is reflected in the slaves' plantation songs. For the few rites the slaves were permitted to observe--chiefly those involved with death and, in some places, religion--and for the few activities in which they engaged, there was always relevant music.

The larger part of the songs in the extant ante-bellum repertory is of a religious nature. . . .

But there is no evidence to support an assumption that such a condition was typical. In fact, it seems that on most plantations the opposite was true. The song types referred to most frequently in ante-bellum literature were rarely religious, and there were many more references to working and dancing than to praying...The nonreligious songs fall into several major categories: work-songs of many kinds, dance songs, play songs, story songs or ballads, songs of social comment, gossip songs. satirical songs, field hollers and street cries, and sorrow songs. The religious songs, include those associated with worship, worship-related activities, and death. Generally these songs are called spirituals.

The most common poetic structure is the call-and-response form, in which solo verses alternate with refrain lines. There seems to be no typical pattern with regard to length of lines or to relationship between solo and refrain lines. In some texts all of the lines have four metric feet (that is, four accents in each line), which in other texts four-foot lines alternate with three-foot lines (the so-called "ballad meter"). Moreover, some texts have refrain lines of two metric feet....

Another common form is strophic, in which a four-line stanza alternates with a four-line chorus. the chorus typically consisting of three repeated lines and refrain (as a-a-a-Refrain), and the stanza of varying form (as a-R-a-R, a-b-c-R, or a-b-a-c). . . .

In a publication of William C. Nell, <u>The Colored Patriots</u> of the American Revolution (1855), there appears what is possibly the earliest record of a slave song text with three-line stanzas instead of the conventional four-line stanzas. . . . The three-line sorrow song was probably the prototype for the blues of a later time.

> Of course, not all of the slave songs employ the typical forms as outlined above. Sometimes a text, while utilizing the predictable repetition, reflects an unusual arrangement of words into patterns. . . . [1]

2. General information about black American folk spirituals--

A list of all the accomplishments of the African-American spirituals:

THINGS THE SPIRITUAL HAS DONE

Provided expression for inarticulate masses
Helped to supply a national music
Contributed to world music
Improved understanding between the races
Produced good dance music (by fathering jazz)
Created enthusiasm among musicians
Achieved popularity by reaction of minds of those almost driven to distraction by American complexities
Developed the human brotherhood
Challenged the concept of Nordic superiority
Interested and aroused the white man through innate eloquence
Showed black pioneers at work
Produced remarkable physical effects
Told of universal striving and weariness
Went straight to the heart
Helped people to the simple faith which higher education left faltering
Reflected the four freedoms
Cast a potent spell that revivifies the past

---

[1]Eileen Southern. The Music of Black Americans. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971), 175, 176, 189, 190, 192.

THINGS THE SPIRITUAL IS

Inspiration and memory "of the living heart of history"
America's greatest artistic achievement
Music of the highest aesthetic quality
Most extensive and varied body of folk songs now alive and growing
An international, universal language
Most beautiful body of folk music in the world
Loveliest sounds
Most exquisite
Ecstatic
At once the admiration and despair of educated musicians
Source of inspiration for world's musical experience
One of the greatest gifts of black man to human family
Most vital area in United States folk music
"Perfectest flower of the ages"
Universally popular in the United States
Sign of nobility
Unique and inimitable
Song of the Negro soul
Grouping of an uprooted African people among alien words, alien customs, and heartbreaking readjustments
Proof of what the Negro can do
Hope of our musical future
"Gold-dusty from tumbling amidst the stars"
The race's richest treasure
Lively leaven in American way of life
More thrilling than any concert song
Most significant contribution of folk and religious songs to our national culture
Best moaning music in the world
Its beauty "beyond the limitations of language, arts, and time"

THINGS THE SPIRITUAL IS NOT

Not lament, but exaltation
Seldom grotesque
Not relic of degradation

THINGS THE SPIRITUAL SHOULD DO

Call forth white sympathy and cooperation
Tie North and South together [2]

---

[2]John Lovel, Jr. Black Song: The Forge and the Flame. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 581-583.

3. General information about black blues--

> . . . Most frequently the blues has a three-line stanza, of which the second line is a restatement of the first and third is a contrasting statement. The latter may supply an explanation for the question raised by the first two lines, or it may simply provide a philosophical comment upon the situation. . . .
>
> Like most Negro folk music, the blues tends to move in duple rhythms and have syncopated melody. Its musical form parallels the poetic form, generally with an a-a-b arrangement for the three-line text, each phrase consisting of four measures and the entire song of twelve measures. To be sure, a blues form may be contracted to eight measures or expanded to sixteen. The melody for each line is typically condensed into a little more than two measures of the four-measure phrase; this allows for a "break" at the end of each line, for improvisation on the accompanying instrument (guitar, piano, or instrumental ensemble), during which the singer interjects spoken asides such as "Oh, Lordy," "Yes, man," "Oh, play it," etc. The resulting effect is a call-and-response structure, the instrumental improvisation representing the "response" to the voice's 'call.'
>
> The blues melody derives from an altered scale in which the third, fifth, seventh, and occasionally the sixth degrees are treated very casually, sometimes being lowered and at other times being used at the natural pitch levels of the major scale. At these points in the scale the singer is apt to "scoop", "swoop," or "slur." The altered tones are commonly called "blues notes."

MOTIVATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES (CLASS, GROUP, AND/OR INDIVIDUAL) FOR SPECIFIC USE AND DISCUSSION OF FOLK ELEMENTS FOUND IN FOLK SONG TYPES--SPIRITUALS, BLUES, WORK SONGS, SECULAR SONGS

1. Discuss elements of black folk tradition basically found in black folk song-types.

2. Interpret the black folk-types literally.

3. Discuss the symbolism found in black song-types (if there is any).

4. Discuss the allegory in the black song-types (if there is any).

5. Relate the black folk song-types to present life experiences, the black experience, the human condition, the human dilemma, the irony of life, concepts of "blackness," protest elements, work, or happiness.

6. Discuss figurative language in the illustrations of black folk song-types (if there is any). Tell how it is used effectively.

7. Give musical performances or mock TV or theater productions based upon the use of black folk tradition features and characteristics and black folk song-types (spirituals, some ballads, work songs, blues, be-bop, jazz rhythms, etc.) set to music.

8. Play and discuss recordings or tapes of all the black folk song-types (commercial types)--mainly poetry types--written by known authors (i.e., Gwendolyn Brooks, Don Lee, etc.). Follow up the listening session with the writing of a composition or class or group discussions.

9. Use the structural pattern of poetry section of this presentation entitled "Pre-Reading Process" to discuss all of the poetic forms of the black folk tradition.

10. Tell or re-tell the black folk song-types (selected by student or teacher) in prose form (if this is appropriate for the particular work).

11. Discuss aspects of the black American dialect found in black American folk song-types.

12. Show how the form of black folk song-types fit the content.

13. After pre-reading, reading in more detail, and/or discussions of some folk song-types (selected), base a composition (or compositions as assigned) upon the following thematic characteristics (or terms) that may be applied to the black folk tradition. Relate the theme to personal situations and/or present day situations.

escape
frustration
peace
security
rage
fear
justice
fate
hope
weakness
triumph
strength
cunning
melancholy
mercy
opportunity
grief
simplicity
primitivism
disillusionment
fervor
deliverance
cares
troubles
aspiration
work
sex
hard luck
reverence
war
power
greed
democracy
love
unrequited love
Christianity
happiness
materialism
mask
religion
power of nature
jealousy
laughter
suffering
deception
otherworldliness
misery
family
travel
fantasy
transcendence
journey or quest
mobility
catharsis
resolution
cynicism
gaiety
ambivalence
nostalgia
mastery
loneliness
pain
truthfulness
p e r s o n a l i t y
change
revolutionary
change
destiny
defiance
social living
human moods
pride
camouflage
rebellion
despair
sorrow
mirth
violence
regression
non-violence
determination
home
narrative of personal experience
sense of well-being
need for change in the existing order of things
developing one's character
immortality
socio-economic existence
transitoriness of things
morality builder
patience
resignation
ambivalence
tragedy
comedy

Base WRITING ASSIGNMENTS upon the discussions of the relevant above listed information and/or those items that are not directly stated as writing assignments.

THE USE OF BLACK AMERICAN FOLK SERMONS TO TEACH

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

1. Analyze black American folk sermons (TV or taped or live or written productions of a prose copy) for use in detecting errors in reasoning and the appeals to emotions and ethics. (Rational-Ethical-Emotional appeals)

2. How does the form of black American folk sermons fit the content of the sermons?

3. Write and deliver orally black American folk sermons, putting emphasis upon the features and/or characteristics of the black American folk sermon.

4. Examine black American folk tradition elements (by way of TV or taped or live or written productions of a prose copy) in modern day black American folk sermons by black ministers. Write themes based upon the message and/or its delivery or stylistic effects.

THE USE OF AfRICAN-AMERICAN JOKES TO TEACH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

1. Conduct mock comedian presentations of African-American jokes. Discuss elements of these jokes.

2. Conduct joke contests between individuals in the class or between groups. Discuss the effectiveness of the winning jokes as rhetorical strategies which contain the black punch line effect.

3. Write and perform parodies.

4. View live or taped TV radio variety shows featuring black comedian. Discuss their rhetorical styles, use of verbal strategies and the features of the black American folk tradition, and the use of the joke punch line.

****Refer to Roger Abraham's Deep Down in the Jungle for additional information about African-American jokes.

Sterling A. Brown, an outstanding black author and critic, makes the following statement about African-American jokes:

> Negroes borrow, of course, from the teeming storehouse of American jokes. Jokes about Negroes are of three types. The first includes those told by whites generally to whites (the king collected by Irvin Cobb, for instance, and the stand-bys for after-dinner speakers, with such black face minstrelsy props as watermelon, chicken, razor, excessive fright, murder of the English language, etc.). Some of these may be found among Negroes who will belittle their own for a laugh as quickly as any other people will, but they are not the most popular. The white man's mark on a Negro joke often does not help it. A second type is told by Negroes to whites to gain a point. Sometimes verging on sarcasm, they use the license of the court fool. Then there are jokes strictly for a Negro audience, what John Dollard calls "part of the arsenal of reprisal against white people.[3]

[3]Sterling A. Brown, "Negro Folk Expression," in Black Expression. ed. Addison Gayle, Jr. (New York: Weybright and Talley, Inc., 1969) 13 and 14.

BLACK AMERICAN VERBAL AND RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

The following black (mainly urban) ghetto verbal strategies are parts of a black oral tradition and culture that demand the use of a secret code of the black street culture and it in-group members as well as an exclusive type of black ghetto idiom:

Rapping, one of the most widely used of all the black verbal strategies, is a form of conversation that is lively, interesting, and fluent. Rapping may also be descriptive of a narrative or a colorful rundown of a past event. Generally, rapping is a sales-type of persuasion with a lively personal style that thrives upon control and manipulation of someone in order to make him or her do or give up something.

Running it down is a verbal instrument which involves giving (or requesting) information, advice, clarification, or addition to some information already presented. It is a way of giving explanation or repetition, and it comes as a request that hinges upon surprise or disbelief on the part of the listener to understand what has already been said. Style and personality are at the center of this strategy.

Jiving often refers to communication (used by the audience or the listener) which attempts to put the speaker down. Often the term jiving is used in the sense of "shucking and jiving" or "all that jive" or "off the wall stuff."

Shucking has a particular meaning when used by blacks in referring to whites or in referring to blacks. Many shuckers are "Uncle Toms" and "Aunt Janes" or those people who, when faces with or exposed to a dangerous or suspicious situation, often do what they are expected to do: pretend to be submissive or simple minded (Abrahams & Gay, 1972). Shucking is a defensive verbal strategy, but when one is shucking in order to "whup the game," the offensive strategy is used as a guise designed to manipulate someone to relinquish something or to feel or act a particular way. When blacks use shucking on other blacks, they use appropriate folk talk and gestures, thus giving a false, playful impression so that the person being "put on" senses the jest and goes along with it for the pleasure, or because of a high estimation of the style (Kochman, 1969).

Copping a plea, like shucking and jiving, emphasizes the ability to get out of a situation through compromise. However, copping a plea is a more direct verbal strategy in which one recognizes the superiority of someone else and, hence, asks or begs for mercy, pity, or sympathy. This may be called loss of face or loss of status among a person's peers (Kochman, 1969). One uses copping a

plea when fearful or insecure or when wanting to show respect for or fear of someone who is more powerful or superior.

Sounding attempts to insult someone in varying ways and degrees-from the word game used to test attitude and disposition to friendly and petulant quarreling, to words used to start a fight. The sound may be a simple challenge. The effectiveness of the sound is measured by the quickness of the answer or response that is received, or by its unexpected or quick witted nature. If it takes the contender a long time to respond to the sound, then the sound is said to be good or effective. Other terms which refer to sounding are "coming down hard" or being "foul" or "cold." The aim of sounding is to reduce the status of an opponent through verbal power. Group presence is important to the game (very often helpful in preventing a physical fight).

Signifying, another verbal strategy, is referred to as sounding or insulting someone. It involves boasting, implying, begging, or inciting someone through gestures or verbal play. Signifying is harping, needling, lying, and cajoling. It is the ability to talk around the subject, never quite coming to the point. It is also making fun of a person or a situation.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS (ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN) USING FEATURES, TYPES AND VERBAL STRATEGIES OF THE BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION

1. Write and produce skits incorporating black folk types and/or verbal strategies (except black folk tales).

2. Conduct group discussions based upon types of black American folk literature. The groups should report to the class and give demonstrations of the usages of the various types when this is appropriate.

3. Make group or individual collections of black American folk literature (mainly in scrap book form) best likes by a student or by a group.

4. Discuss and demonstrate the use of black American folk tradition types, features, and verbal strategies in the popular arts (music, comics, TV, radio, magazines, and newspapers).

5. Examine the use of black American folk elements, features, types, black dialect, and verbal strategies found in commercials and advertisements on TV, radio, in magazines and newspapers.

6. Distinguish between the written tradition and the oral tradition of literature. Illustrate by using works by black American authors.

7. Examine black American folk elements used by black disc jockeys and black comedians or comediennes.

8. Conduct oral class, individual, and group discussions based upon black American folk tradition with an emphasis upon oral fluency and not upon correctness in the use of Standard English.

9. Do oral and written compositions emphasizing the various language styles (formal, casual, etc.).

10. Discuss black American folk features (thematic and stylistic) found in black American drama by known authors, such as Baldwin and Hughes.

11. Keep a journal of out of class contacts with aspects of the black American folk tradition (concerts, movies, readings, conversations with friends and relatives, church services, TV, etc.).

12. Conduct personal student teacher conferences (20-30 minutes as needed or as often as is necessary or possible with interchange about writing problems and new experiences with the black American folk tradition.

13. Conduct student evaluation sessions in class based upon reproduced copies of their individual compositions distributed to the entire class for analysis and theme critique.

THE USE OF BLACK VERBAL STRATEGIES TO TEACH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

1. Conduct oral discussions of the black verbal strategies listed in this section of the presentation.

2. Write creative productions of all black verbal strategies.

3. Give the functions, purposes, usages, and effectiveness of each black verbal strategy.

4. Write themes based upon the rhetorical principles found in the various black verbal strategies or a combination of the strategies. Use black American dialect for this writing assignment.

THE USE OF BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION LITERARY WORKS WRITTEN BY KNOWN BLACK AMERICAN AUTHORS TO TEACH RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

***Emphasis placed upon POETRY, SHORT FICTION, NOVELS, SERMONS, AND DRAMAS

1. In the discussion of and as a basis for writing assignments based upon works by known black writers of black folk literature, use the section of this presentation entitled "General Areas for Class, Group, and Individual Activities and Assignments Based upon the Narrative Types of the Black Folk Tradition" and/or (as desired and needed) the section of this presentation entitled "Pre-Reading Process," which is useful for the study of black folk song-types (words-poetry).

2. Instead of the use of the traditional ways to introduce literature, use literary works in the black folk tradition as the bases for discussions, demonstrations, group and individual activities, writing assignments, dialect and code switching exercises, and style shifting exercises or drills. Either develop entire units on poetry, the novel, short fiction, drama, and the essay (black folk sermon) by using black folk tradition literary works by known authors (or possibly using anonymous black folk types or genres). Integrate black folk tradition literature with mainstream literature (in making a preliminary or pre-reading introduction to literature).

3. Find folk elements in the poetry of Dunbar, James Edwin Campbell, Daniel Webster Davis, James D. Corrothers, Sterling Brown, James Weldon Johnson, Margaret Walker, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Don Lee, and James Baldwin.

4. Find black American folk elements (thematic and stylistic) in the following novels:

Baldwin, James	<u>Go Tell It On the Mountain</u>
Ellison, Ralph	<u>The Invisible Man</u>
McKay, Claude	<u>Banjo</u>
Walker, Margaret	<u>Jubilee</u>

5. Show how the modern short story differs from the straight (black) folk tale. Illustrate by using works by know and unknown black writers of the modern short story and the straight (black) folk tale.

6. Find folk elements in the modern short fiction (stories) by black American writers--Chesnutt, Baldwin, Hughes, Ernest J. Gaines, and William Melvin Kelly.

7. Find folk elements in essays (black sermons) by John Jasper, Martin Luther King, and C.C. Lovelace.

8. Find folk elements in poetry that has the structure of the black American folk sermon (words by James Weldon Johnson).

Base WRITINGS ASSIGNMENTS upon the discussions of the above listed information and/or those items that are not directly stated as writing assignments.

THE USE OF ASPECTS OF THE BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION TO TEACH TRADITIONAL RHETORIC

1. Paragraph and theme development may be based upon the use of the following methods as a basis for motivational and instructional activities and writing assignments:

   NARRATION--use of black folk tales, black folk sermons (factual and impressionistic)

   DESCRIPTION--use of black folk song-types, black folk tales, black folk sermons

   EXPOSITION--use of black sermons

   ARGUMENTATION--use of black verbal strategies

2. Use the language of the black folk tradition-types and strategies to make distinctions between (1) abstract-concrete words: (2) connotation-denotation; (3) general-specific words; (4) literal language-figurative language; (5) impressionistic-factual description.

3. Composition topics may be drawn from themes treated in the black folk types and the black verbal strategies with an emphasis upon theme unity and coherence. Use the following types of development:

   a. chronological order
   b. examples
   c. comparison and/or contrast
   d. classification
   e. definition
   f. character analysis
   g. paraphrasing
   h. summarizing
   i. illustration
   j. cause and/or effect
   k. process analysis (e.g., Give an explanation of how to execute the black verbal strategies.)

SPECIFIC COMPOSITION TOPICS BASED UPON ASPECTS OF THE BLACK AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION

1. Discuss how black American ghetto idiom is used in recent black folk poetry.

2. Discuss the following concepts as they are presented by the black folk tradition:

    a. exaggeration
    b. religion
    c. philosophical ideas
    d. use of Biblical imagery
    e. morality
    f. humor
    g. death
    h. problems of identity
    i. optimism

3. What makes aspects of the black American folk tradition universal in appeal?

4. Write compositions based upon the following topics (or those selected by the teacher or students):
    a. human dilemma
    b. human condition
    c. black experience
    d. conflict
    e. problem and solution or resolution in life situations
    f. emotions produced by black folk genres, such as blues, spirituals, work songs, ballads
    g. irony in a particular black folk type of literature or verbal strategy
    h. distinction between comedy and tragedy as revealed through black folk types or verbal strategies
    i. protest through the black folk tradition (features, types, verbal strategies)
    j. concept of "blackness" as revealed by aspects of the black folk tradition

5. What part does psychology play in the productions of the black folk tradition?

6. Show how aspects of the black folk tradition reflect a particular way of life.

7. Show the relationships between black folk song-type words (or poetry) and the music of these types---spirituals, blues, work songs, some ballads.

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LIST OF AND DESCRIPTIONS OF FORMS AND LITERARY TYPES OF WORKS IN THE

AFRO-AMERICAN FOLK TRADITION

I. Black Folktales

Stories or narration that sprang from a basically oral tradition
Used irony, boasting, symbolism, hyperbole with unique treatment of story-telling and narrative element
Folktales are animals and bird stories, Old Marster and John stories, Colored man and white man stories, hoodoos and two-heads stories, spirits and haunts stories, witches and mermaids stories, the Lord and devil stories, wonders stories, horrors stories, protest stories, scare stories, fool stories, lying tales, preachers and Irishman stories.

II. Black (Negro) Folk Songs

A. Spirituals

Themes--deep religious conviction, note of protest, expresses life of Jesus and other outstanding Biblical figures in accepted religious and lyrical form
Revealed slaves' thoughts in plantation life
Gave blacks faith in their religion, desire for freedom from sin, desire to fly to freedom.
Conveyed feeling of oppression (from sense of sin) and elation (from sense of spiritual salvation)---oppression of sinners universal, not racial, as it applies to all "sinners", hence all human beings
Compared slaves' condition to that of Israelites with Pharaoh representing the master-class and Canaan becoming a land of freedom (either Canada or the North)
Had and possibly seen with two meanings for slaves as part of code language--a wordly one (flight, escape, freedom) and a spiritual one which was usually only seen by the master

Most are anonymous and passed on by word of mouth with a lead singer occasionally varying his stanzas
In code-like vocabulary and ironical tone
Used symbol, image, figurative language, black dialect, rhythm, dual and double meanings

B. Folk Blues

Mainly anonymous black folk poetry and black secular songs
Dealt with grief, self-pity, hard times, black luck, unrequited love and despair
Sung mainly by a single singer
Are mocking, sarcastic, tragic-comic, tragic, dramatic, curious with theme of the will to endure, to relate to singer and listener alike with the shared suffering of race or poverty, or of lost love--to repeat the suffering of hope of making the distress more tolerable through the knowledge that it is understood and experienced by all
Slow, melanchology song with jazz rhythm usually in a major key but with the 3rd and 7th tones (blue notes) flattened optionally

C. Slave Secular Songs

Took the form of nursery rhymes, plays, dance and love-making songs
Had rich form and irony, wit, humor, wisdom
Very often songs of ironic protest
Were poetic songs and songs often of ironic protest

D. Folk Work Songs

Sung with the work cadence (rope-pulling, hammer swinging) which implied that the work will never cease and that the worker will never free himself from the work
Had effect of never-ending intrusion of the labor itself with repetition of onomatopoeia sounds of the work

E. Folk Black Ballad

Narrative poem that sprang up from life of black people and is passed from one general to another orally
Versions may vary in certain locations
Usually about black heroes who performed unusual acts and were presented as epic figures
Were and still are transmitted and changed by word of mouth as they record tragedies in the lives of black people
Had a poetic style in a story form

F. Some Other Songs

Chantey and other miscellaneous songs

G. Afro-American Jokes

Terse, short but black witty tales which depend upon a punch line conclusion for comical or humorous effect
Black dialect is the mode of expression

H. Proverbs

I. Superstitions

J. Black American Folk Sermons

Rich in Biblical images, poetic language (metaphor and simile), emotional appeal, skillful narrative development, use of idiomatic expression within the language of the Bible
Blend commonplace experience with historical action
Characterized by allusions, symbolism, rhythmical pattern and black dialect

K. Names

List of names and labelings attached exclusively to black people

L. Riddles

M. Rhymes

N. Children's Rhymes and Pastimes

O. Folk Tradition in Black American Literature

Almost all black American writers have used some forms and materials from the black folk tradition
Outstanding writers who have used the black folk tradition are Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles Chesnutt, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Don L. Lee, Margaret Walker, Ernest Gaines, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston

P. Contemporary Folk Forms

Flip Wilson, Godfrey Cambridge, Dick Gregory, Jackie "Moms" Mabley, and Bill Cosby have used monologue comedy in their performance with outstanding use of black folk tradition
Bill Cosby's "Weird Herold" and "Fat Albert" sketches are examples as well as Flip Wilson's "Rev" tales (preacher tales descendent)

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